

Missed Connections by Lillielle

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Summary: Disclaimer: I own nothing. AU. Beverly has no idea that it's started again, she just wants a new life with Kay, away from Tom. It has other ideas.

Missed Connections

"I used to live," she says, half-musing, as she rises from the plastic, cracked seat and takes another drag from her cigarette. "In a town called Derry."

"Where's that?" Kay asks, only slightly interested as she riffles through another magazine. Faded sunlight streams through the bus station's grimy windows, dappling Beverly's cheeks with light and making it seem as if her hair has caught fire. *January embers...*

"Maine," Bev answers, clarity returning to her face as she stubs out her cigarette. "It's in Maine."

"That's nice," Kay smiles, a plastic smile that barely reaches her eyes as she sets down the tattered copy of *Vogue*, crossing and re-crossing her legs. There is still an enormous splotched bruise that feathers across Kay's calf, and every time Bev's eyes skim by it, she winces. She knows who caused that bruise, and his name starts with Tom and ends with Rogan.

It's been four days since the phone call, the one that cut off mid-ring. It was still enough to wake up Tom, though. Still enough to make him angry, to reach for his belt as his hangover clamored at his temples. The belt thwacked across her breasts and somehow-somehow-it is enough to wake her from this living nightmare.

The thud of the belt and the spark in her mind, as if something has cracked open in the bottom of her mind, far down where she can't reach anymore.

She flees to Kay, and Tom follows, and the police come, but not soon enough. Not soon enough to prevent Bev's puffed black eye, or the bruise on Kay's calf. The chances of him making bail are slim, but for the moment, they both want out. As far away as they can possibly get.

"Want to go there?" Kay questions, rubbing her thigh with an absent-minded grimace.

"Oh god, no," Bev laughs, but it has an uneasy, howling quality to it that makes her best friend look at her rather sharply. "No. Anywhere but Derry."

"Why?" Kay asks, as the loudspeaker crackles with news of the next approaching bus.

Bev looks away, memories crowding her head like a jumble of old postcards, the edges tattered and smeared with blood and sewer muck. *We all float down here, Beverly...soon you'll float, too...*

"Just because," she shrugs carelessly. "Come on, I think this is our bus."

As Bev and Kay get to their feet, gathering their bags, no one notices the slightly askew air conditioning vent only a few feet away.

Or the brilliant orange puff that gleams behind the grating.